

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LUSAKA 00569 01 OF 02 231326Z
ACTION SS-25

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O 231200Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7688
INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 0569

EXDIS

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

USUN FOR AMB YOUNG

LONDON FOR MOOSE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:PDEV RH UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: CONSULTATIONS WITH THE BRITISH ON NEXT STEPS

REF:LONDON 2978 AND 2979, STATE 46686, DAR 757

1. REGRET THAT WE ARE ENTERING THE DISCUSSION SO LATE.
FACT THAT REFTELS WERE NOT SENT NIACT, TOGETHER WITH
RECEPTION DIFFICULTIES, HAVE DELAYED THE FOLLOWING RESPONSE.

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2. IT SEEMS TO US THAT WE CAN AGREE WITH THE BASIC
ASSUMPTION OF OWEN'S ANALYSIS: THAT OUR EFFORTS SHOULD BE
DIRECTED AT BRINGING THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL NATIONALISTS
TOGETHER IN ANY NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WHICH IS REACHED. THERE
ARE TWO ROUTES IN EXISTENCE WHICH WE COULD FOLLOW TO DO SO:
THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSAL (AAP) AND THE INTERNAL SALISBURY
TALKS. AS DICK MOOSE AND COMPANY POINTED OUT TO OWEN, OUR

ASSESSMENT SEEMS TO BE VERY DIFFERENT THAN HIS ON THE CERTAINTY OF ULTIMATE SUCCESS OF THE SALISBURY TALKS AND NKOMO'S WILLINGNESS TO JOIN THEM.

3. WE CAN ONLY GUESS AT HOW THE TALKS NOW GOING IN SALISBURY WILL COME OUT. ON THE BASIS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LAST 12 YEARS, HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE SMITH WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR A SETTLEMENT WHICH LEAVES THE WHITES IN A VERY STRONG POSITION IN RHODESIA AND HIM IN CHARGE DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD IN SALISBURY. HIS SUCCESS IN GETTING HIS OWN WAY WITH THE NATIONALISTS ON THE BLOCKING MECHANISM OF THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION WILL EMBOLDEN HIM IN THE CONTINUING

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DISCUSSIONS. IT WILL ALSO HARDEN THE POSITION OF THE NATIONALISTS WHO NOW MUST DEMAND GREATER CONCESSIONS FROM HIM ON THE TRANSITION PERIOD THAN THEY WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE. WE BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT FURTHER AGREEMENT WILL BE DIFFICULT IN SALISBURY. THERE IS NO WAY OF TELLING HOW IT WILL COME OUT BUT THE RESULT THERE IS FAR FROM A FOREGONE CONCLUSION AND WHAT WE DO IN THE MEANTIME CAN HAVE AN IMPORTANT BEARING ON IT.

4. THE MOST IMPORTANT WAY IN WHICH WE CAN AFFECT THE OUTCOME OF THE SALISBURY NEGOTIATIONS IS THROUGH THE AAP. IF WE DROP IT NOW, WE WILL CUT THE GROUND OUT FROM SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA, LEAVING THEM WITH NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO CONFIDENTIAL

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ACCEPT WHAT SMITH OFFERS. THIS, IN TURN, COULD LEAD TO A SETTLEMENT WHICH WILL RENDER IMPOSSIBLE JUST WHAT OWEN WANTS TO DO, I.E., BRING IN NKOMO, BECAUSE THE TERMS OF THE SETTLEMENT WOULD BE SUCH THAT NKOMO COULD NEVER ACCEPT.

5. THERE ARE TWO OTHER REASONS WHY WE SHOULD KEEP THE AAP ALIVE. IN A SITUATION WHERE THE FUTURE IS VERY UNCLEAR AND WHEN SO MANY UNFORESEEN EVENTS ARE CONSTANTLY OCCURRING, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT IN A FEW DAYS, WEEKS OR MONTHS THE AAP WILL AGAIN RE-EMERGE AS THE MOST LIKELY AND PRACTICAL SOLUTION. CERTAINLY HERE IN LUSAKA WE SEE CLEAR EVIDENCE OF A MOVE TO SUPPORT NOT WHAT IS GOING ON INTERNALLY IN SALISBURY, BUT THE AAP. SECONDLY, THOUGH THE AAP HAS NO STRONG SUPPORTERS AMONG THE MAJOR PARTICIPANTS, IT IS STILL ACCEPTED BY THE FRONTLINE AND THE WORLD GENERALLY AS A BASIS FOR A RESPECTABLE SOLUTION. UNTIL THERE IS SOMETHING ELSE, WE WOULD BE MAKING A MISTAKE TO REJECT IT. BY CONTINUING TO EXPRESS OUR SUPPORT FOR IT, WE CAN MAINTAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE FL, THE NIGERIANS AND, WE SHOULD NOT FORGET, MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE WHO MAY NOT SAY SO, BUT CERTAINLY DO NOT WANT TO SEE IT DISAPPEAR AS AN OPTION. THUS IT PROVIDES A VERY CONVENIENT AND USEFUL COVER FOR OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO

BRING THE SIDES TOGETHER.

6. THIS IS A TIME TO KEEP OPTIONS OPEN. WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD MAINTAIN SUPPORT FOR THE AAP AND REFRAIN FROM CONDEMNING THE SALISBURY TALKS. AMONG THE MANY ADVANTAGES FOR THIS IS THE USEFULNESS OF KEEPING NKOMO WORRIED THAT WE MIGHT SUPPORT SALISBURY, WHICH GIVES ADDED INCENTIVE TO HIM TO TIE US TO THE AAP. FURTHERMORE, WE BELIEVE THAT THIS POSITION WOULD BE UNDERSTOOD BY MANY AFRICANS WHO THEMSELVES ARE FACED WITH A SERIOUS DILEMMA. THE FL AND OTHERS WOULD CERTAINLY FEEL BETRAYED, AND WE WOULD LOSE OUR POSITION WITH THEM, IF WE WERE TO EXPRESS CLEAR ENCOURAGEMENT OR SUPPORT FOR SALISBURY. BUT IN OUR VIEW THEY WOULD UNDERSTAND IF WE CONFINE OURSELVES TO CONTINUING EXPRESSION
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OF SUPPORT FOR THE AAP AND A WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE TOWARDS SALISBURY. AT LEAST WE BELIEVE THIS TO BE THE CASE IN LUSAKA.

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EXDIS

7. WHERE WE COMPLETELY FAIL TO FOLLOW OWEN'S LOGIC IS ON KAUNDA AND NKOMO'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SALISBURY INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. WHILE ZAMBIA'S ACUTE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS ARE EVIDENT TO US, KAUNDA VERY CLEARLY DOES NOT LOOK AT THINGS THE SAME WAY AS WE DO. WE SHOULD NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ASSURANCES WHICH WE BELIEVE HE HAS RECEIVED FROM THE SOVIETS, EAST EUROPEANS AND CUBANS OF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT TO ACHIEVE THE KIND OF SETTLEMENT HE WANTS IN RHODESIA. NKOMO AND KAUNDA BELIEVE THAT HISTORY IS ON THEIR SIDE AND THAT THEY CAN HOLD OUT UNTIL EVENTS RUN THEIR INEVITABLE COURSE. THEY WOULD PREFER GETTING THEIR HELP ELSEWHERE AND THEY ARE VAGUELY AWARE OF THE DANGERS OF GETTING AS CLOSE AS THEY MAY HAVE TO TO THE COMMUNISTS, BUT WHETHER NAIVELY OR NOT, THEY ARE PREPARED TO TAKE THESE RISKS. IN ANY EVENT, WHAT THEY DO NOT APPEAR TO BE PREPARED TO DO AT THIS MOMENT IS TO THROW AWAY THEIR CONFIDENTIAL

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POSITION OF STRENGTH, COMPROMISE THEIR PRINCIPLES, AND SACRIFICE THEIR SUPPORT BY JOINING THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. IF THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH OWEN POINTS TO HAVE ANY IMPACT AT ALL, THEY ARGUE FOR A MORE RECEPTIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE AAP AND IT IS HERE THAT WE ARE SEEING SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT, AS STATED ABOVE.

8. THE DAY MAY COME WHEN WE WOULD WISH TO URGE KAUNDA AND NKOMO TO THROW IN WITH AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT IF WE DO SO NOW, WE WOULD NOT ONLY FAIL TO CONVINCE THEM, BUT WE WOULD LOSE OUR INFLUENCE IN THE SITUATION AS WELL AS THE POSITION OF CONFIDENCE WHICH WE HAVE BUILT UP WITH AFRICAN LEADERS DURING THE LAST YEAR.

9. WE CONTINUE TO SEE MERIT IN AN EARLY TRIP BY DICK MOOSE TO THIS PART OF THE WORLD. TO US THERE IS A SLIGHT ADVANTAGE TO HIS PROCEEDING DIRECTLY FROM LONDON BECAUSE IT WOULD PLAY DOWN THE IDEA OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN US AND THE BRITISH. THE AFRICANS DO NOT CONSIDER US AS THE PATSY OF THE BRITISH IN THIS EFFORT. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY WELCOME OUR HEALTHY INFLUENCE AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE INITIATIVE WITH US. WE CAN UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING AN IMPRESSION THAT SUCH A TRIP WAS A WRECKING OPERATION AIMED AT THE SALISBURY TALKS. IT SEEMS TO US IT COULD BE CAST IN TERMS OF THE NEED FOR US TO CONSULT WITH THE PARTIES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE AAP AND THE NEW CIRCUMSTANCES RESULTING FROM THE AGREEMENTS ANNOUNCED IN SALISBURY. THE BRITISH CERTAINLY RECOGNIZE THAT THEY THEMSELVES CANNOT CONSULT DIRECTLY AT THIS TIME. WE WOULD HOPE THAT WE COULD PRESENT SUCH A TRIP TO THEM AS PROVIDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN THEM AND THE AFRICANS TO TEST OPINION IN

ORDER TO HAVE A BETTER BASIS FOR CONSIDERING WHERE WE GO
FROM HERE. WE DOUBT THAT AFRICANS WOULD CONDEMN DICK'S
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PRESENCE AT THIS TIME. IN OUR VIEW, THEY WOULD BE MORE
LIKELY TO USE IT AS A WELCOME OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS VIEWS
WHICH WE THINK WOULD INDICATE A SURPRISING SUPPORT FOR THE
AAP. THIS, IN TURN, COULD HAVE A SALUTARY EFFECT IN SALISBURY.
WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE INFORMATION GATHERED IN SUCH A
TRIP CAN HELP DISSUADE OWEN FROM WHAT SEEMS TO US TO BE
AN ILL-ADVISED COURSE AND CAN CONTRIBUTE TO POLICY DISCUSSION
IN WASHINGTON.

10. IT SEEMS TO US IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR DICK TO PROCEED
FROM LONDON, HAVING STARTED OUT TO CONSULT WITH THE BRITISH
ON RHODESIA, THAN IT MAY BE TO INITIATE A TRIP ANEW
FROM WASHINGTON AT A LATER DATE, WHEN IT MAY BE GIVEN
EVEN GREATER SIGNIFICANCE. THERE WILL NEVER BE AN
EASY TIME. HOWEVER, WE HOPE THAT IF HE RETURNS TO
WASHINGTON FROM LONDON, THE TRIP CAN BE SCHEDULED SOON.
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